

TIME BAR NAVIGATION IN A MEDIA DIARY APPLICATION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to digital storage and management of media files and, more specifically, to a media file management application that incorporates a time
5 bar for locating media files.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The rapid growth of digital communication has made it possible for all kinds of
10 digital media items to be communicated amongst various types of wireless and wire line communication devices. For instance, the cellular or mobile telephone is no longer limited to telephonic voice communication and may include other means of digital communication, such as digital networking (i.e., Internet communication, text messaging, and the like). In addition, an increasing number of cellular telephones and other mobile
15 wireless communication devices, such as portable computers, personal data assistants (PDAs) and the like, are being integrated with other means of capturing or producing digital media, such as digital cameras, digital audio recorders, digital video recorders and the like. Technological advances have made it possible for other digital devices, such as digital cameras, digital video recorders, digital audio devices and the like to be equipped
20 with means for digital communication. As more and more digital devices possess the capability to digitally communicate with one another, the amount of digital media items that will be communicated amongst these devices will increase at an alarming rate.

In addition to the onset of more and more digital devices possessing digital communication capabilities, the digital storage capacity of these devices is constantly
25 increasing. In the near future the majority of mobile digital communication terminals may well be equipped with storage capacity in the gigabyte range or greater, allowing these devices to store an enormous amount of digital data. In this environment it will no

longer be prohibitive from a memory capacity standpoint to store a voluminous amount of large file types, such as video, audio or other multimedia files.

5 In the digital communication environment where more and more digital devices, both wireless and wired, are equipped with a means for digital communication and where the storage capacity of these devices has become seemingly endless, the digital communication device will encounter and store innumerable digital media files. As such, the digital communication device will desire a means to access, store, manage and further communicate these digital files in an efficient and user-friendly environment.

10 For example, if a digital communication device receives a digital media file the user of the device would benefit greatly from an application that automatically places the file into a readily accessible storage area and where managing and accessing of the file in the future can occur efficiently, without the user having to spend a great deal of time searching for the media file.

15 Most digital communication devices, such as desktop or laptop computers, personal data assistants (PDAs) or the like either come equipped or can be configured by the user to implement a daily planner application. The daily planner allows the user coordinate and manage their upcoming schedule of events by inputting event reminders in a digital calendar. The digital planner provides the unique benefit of sending the user electronic reminders, in the form of alarms or visual or audible messages, when an
20 upcoming event is pending. The digital planner has proven to be a highly successful tool for the businessperson and, in most instances, has replaced the need for conventional hard copy or paper daily planners.

Most digital media files can be easily categorized and stored according to a calendar date. For example, a wedding video can be categorized according to the date of
25 the wedding and photographs taken at a party can be categorized according to the date of the party. These are examples of categorizing the media file based on the creation date of the media file. In other instances the media file can be associated with the date on which the media file is used or presented or the date on which the recipient receives the file. For example, a multimedia presentation for a business meeting may be categorized
30 according to the date of the presentation and a personal text file from a friend may be categorized according to the date received.

Over time, digital devices with large memory capacity possess the capability to acquire and store an enormous volume of media files. This is especially true as we enter a burgeoning digital communication era where more and more digital devices will possess the capability to communicate digitally. For example, in a future where more and multi-function digital devices are prevalent, such as mobile telephones with digital cameras and conventional digital cameras, digital video recorders and the like have the capability to communicate digitally, the devices will be inundated with digital media files. The user of these devices, and all other digital devices capable of media storage, will desire an application that stores and manages the digital media files. A key attribute for such an application is user efficiency; because the user must be able to efficiently locate media files. This task becomes more complicated as the digital device acquires more and more media files.

An additional concern of handheld digital communication devices is that the display of such devices is typically minimal in size and applications that are implemented on the display must be able to be condensed and presented in a format that provides the user with accessibility to the functions of the application. It is typically easier and more efficient for the user of a handheld touch-screen display to search via a touch function, such as scrolling or the like, as opposed to searching via keystroke entry of text. Therefore, any application that manages digital media files on a handheld digital communication device must accommodate the typically small display of such devices and provide for an efficient means of locating the digital files with the management application.

Therefore, the need exists to develop a media file storage and management application for a digital device that will provide for the storage of a large volume of media files and user efficiency in terms of being able to quickly locate a specific media file. The media file storage and management application should be capable associating and organizing the media files according to a period of time, such as a day, week or the like. As such, the media management application should provide the user with a system for easily navigating through the time periods in order to efficiently locate a media file.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides for a media diary or media management application implemented in a digital device that incorporates a highly navigable time bar for locating media files. The media diary associates and stores media files according to a specific predefined time. The time bar will be hierarchal in nature such that it is presented to the user with various levels that allow the user to maneuver through the levels to pinpoint the specific time period associated with the media files. For example the time bar may incorporate levels associated with years, months, weeks, and/or days. The user of this time bar can start ant the year level and maneuver through the month and week level to locate the specific date associated with the media file.

In one embodiment of the invention an application for representing media files on a digital device includes a computer readable storage medium having computer-readable program instructions embodied in the medium. The computer-readable program instructions will include (1) first instructions for generating a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a predefined time and second instructions for generating a time bar that divides time into segments having a size that depends upon the media files associated with the respective segment of time. The second instructions may include generating a selectable segment that indicates the volume of media files associated with a predefined time, for example, the length of the selectable segment may dictate the volume of media files associated with that particular predefined time. Typically, the first instructions for generating a media view will associate media files with a past predefined time.

The invention may also be embodied in a digital device including a processing unit that executes computer-readable program instructions for accessing media files. The computer-readable program instructions comprising (1) first instructions for generating a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a predefined time, and (2) second instructions for generating a time bar that divides time into segments having a size that depends upon the media files associated with the respective segment of time. Additionally, the digital device will include a display in

communication with the processing unit that presents a combined view of the media view and the hierarchal time bar.

The invention may also be embodied in a method for providing digital media file location capabilities in a media diary application. The method includes the steps of
5 associating a digital media file with a period in time, representing the digital media file in a media view that provides access to the media file through the associated predefined time and displaying a time bar in combination with the media view that provides a user with selectable periods of time for locating the predefined time associated with the digital media file.

10 In addition, a method for using a hierarchal time bar in a media diary application to access a media file is provided. The method includes the steps of providing the user of a digital device a display of a time bar and a media view that represents media files in association with a predefined time, activating one or more time levels of the time bar to display the specific predefined time for which a media file is associated, activating the
15 specific predefined time to display a representation of the media file and the associated predefined time and activating the representation of the media file to access the media file.

The described embodiments of the present invention provide for a media file management application for a digital device that will incorporate a hierarchal time bar for
20 locating media files within the application. The hierarchal time bar provides the user with ease and efficiency in locating the specific predefined time, typically a date, that is associated with the media file. Even in instances in which the media file stores a large quantity of media files over a long period of many years, the user will be able to quickly maneuver through the hierarchal time bar to pinpoint the predefined time associated with
25 the media file. The hierarchal nature of the time bar provides for the relevant portions of the time bar to be displayed on the digital device display, even in those instances in which the digital device is a handheld digital device with a minimal sized display.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

30 Having thus described the invention in general terms, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings, which are not necessarily drawn to scale, and wherein:

Figure 1 is an illustration of a timeline view in combination with a calendar view and media view that incorporates a time bar, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention

5 Figure 2 is an illustration of a calendar view or calendar window as displayed by the media diary.

Figure 3 is an illustration of media view or media window as displayed by the media diary.

Figure 4 is an illustration of a combined media view and calendar view that incorporates a time bar, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

10 Figure 5 is an illustration of a media view that incorporates a time bar, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 6 is a block diagram of a digital device implementing a media diary that incorporated the use of a navigable time bar for locating digital media files, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

15 Figure 7 is a flow diagram of a method for providing access to stored digital media files in a digital media diary application, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 8 is a flow diagram of a method for using the time bar of the media diary application, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present inventions now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, these inventions may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these
25 embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

The present invention provides for a media diary application implemented in a digital device that incorporates the use of a highly navigable time bar. The time bar provides the user of the media diary application with necessary efficiency in locating media files. In addition, the hierarchal nature of the time bar provides for necessary

portions of the time bar to be displayed to the user, regardless of the size of the display.

The media diary application of the present invention will associate media files with a predefined time and, more generally a moment or period of time, or an event, so that the user can manage media files according to the predefined time or event.

Typically, the predefined time will be a specific date associated with a date that the media file was created or intended for. For example, if the media file is an image or video file of a birthday party, the media application may categorize and store the file according to the date of the birthday party. For a complete description of the media diary application see co-pending United States Patent Application No. _____, entitled "Media Diary Application for use with a Digital Device", filed on November 17, 2003, in the name of inventor Myka et al., and assigned to the same assignee as the present invention. That application is herein incorporated by reference as if set forth fully herein.

The media diary application may take the form of a media storage application and a calendar/planner application. In this embodiment, a media view and a calendar view may be displayed in combination with a timeline view that incorporates the time bar of the present invention for ease in navigating the media and calendar views. Alternately,
5 the media diary application may take the form of a media storage application that is displayed as a media view in combination with a timeline view that incorporates the time of the present invention.

The media diary application of the present invention may be implemented and executed on any electronic device that incorporates a display, such as a desktop or
10 portable computer, cellular telephone, personal data assistant (PDA), digital camera, digital camcorder, e-book device, television, digital audio player or the like. In addition the media diary application may be implemented on electronic devices that are connected to an external display, such as a set-top box (STB), personal video recorder (PVR), digital video recorder (DVR) or the like. While in most implementations the digital
15 device that executes the media diary application will be capable of any type of wireless or wireline network communication, such as wireless telecom, short range radio network, Bluetooth®, Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Internet Protocol Data Casting (IPDC), Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB), Infrared Data Association (IrDa), Internet or the like, it is not required that the digital

device be adapted to communicate via network. Devices that are capable of requiring digital media files internally or may access media files through memory devices (e.g., flash storage device, memory sticks, video and audio storage tapes, CD, DVD, removable hard disc device (HDD) and the like) are also applicable.

5 In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the media diary application will be embodied by a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program instructions stored in the medium. The storage medium will typically be a memory device, such as flash ROM memory, HDD or the like. The programming instructions may be written in a standard computer programming language, such as C++,
10 Java or the like. Upon execution by a processing unit as described below, the program instructions will implement the various functions of the media diary application as described below. The computer-readable program instructions include first instructions that will generate a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a moment of time, period of time or event. The computer-
15 readable program instructions also includes second instructions that will generate a calendar view that represents time in calendar format and associates events with respective periods of time and third instructions that generate a hierarchal time bar that divides time into selectable segments for the purpose of accessing within the one or more of the digital media files associated with a predefined time. In another embodiment, the
20 computer-readable program instructions include first instructions that will generate a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a predefined time and second instructions that will generate a hierarchal time bar that divides time into selectable segments for the purpose of accessing within the one or more of the digital media files associated with a predefined time. While the first, second
25 and third instructions may be modules, objects or the like that communicate with one another, the first, second and third instructions need not be discrete or separable portions of the program instructions and may be interspersed throughout if so desired.

Figure 1 illustrates an example of a media diary application display 10 that provides a calendar view 100, a media view 200 and a timeline view 300 with a time bar 310, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The timeline view will
30 incorporate a time bar that is navigable by the user for the purpose of locating media

files. In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, a more detailed description of the time bar, its functionality and methods for the use of the time bar will be provided for later in the detailed description.

In order to better understand the media diary application display **10** of Figure 1, isolated representations of an exemplary calendar view and media view are presented in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2 illustrates an example of a calendar view **100** that provides for the entry of calendar events or reminders and provides the user with a daily planner application, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The calendar view will be generated by first computer-readable program instructions implemented in association with a digital device. It is noted that the calendar view herein depicted and described is by way of example only; other calendar views that provide for the display of calendar events or reminders are also contemplated and within the inventive concepts herein disclosed. Alternatively, the calendar view may be generated by another calendar or personal planner application, in which case, the calendar view is imported into the media diary application from the auxiliary calendar application. While the calendar view is typically associated with future time periods, future events and future reminders, it may also be possible for the calendar view to display past time periods, past events and past reminders.

The calendar view includes date columns **110**, which correspond to a specific date. In the example shown, three date columns are visible on the display corresponding to the current date (i.e., Wednesday, 19 June) and the subsequent two dates. Typically, upon activation of the calendar view the current date will be displayed in the left-hand column of the calendar view with columns for the subsequent dates positioned sequentially to the right. As will be apparent, the calendar view may be differently oriented, such as with rows as opposed to columns or the current date may be displayed in the right hand column, if so desired. In an alternate embodiment the calendar view may include columns **110**, which may correspond to any moment of time, such as year, month, day, hour or the like. Additionally upon activation of the calendar view the current moment of time may be displayed on the middle of the view.

The date columns **110** include multiple time blocks **120**, which provide a descriptive area for information related to calendar events **130**. In the embodiment shown, the time blocks correspond to one-hour time blocks, although the blocks may be for other lengths of time, such as 30-minute blocks. Further, for example if a column
5 represents a year, the time block **120** may represent a month. The calendar view will be vertically scrollable, so that, all of the time blocks for a date column will be viewable by the user. In addition, the calendar view will typically be horizontally scrollable to provide for a view of other date or time columns **110**. In addition, the time blocks may include reminder icons **140**, which provide the media diary user a visual reminder related to an
10 upcoming calendar event. For example in the depicted embodiment, the camera icon reminds the user that calendared event requires or will benefit from a having a camera on-hand.

The information related to calendar events **130** will typically be inputted by the user and include information, such as title of the event, topic of the event, date and time
15 of the event, location of the event, individuals attending the event and the like. A calendar event may be inputted by activating, via keystroke or mouse-type input signal, the time block associated with the event. Upon activation, a window or view is made visible that allows for the user to input information related to the event. Once the calendar event has been inputted and text displayed in the time block, the details of the
20 calendar events may be accessible by activating, via keystroke or mouse-type input signal, the calendar event. In addition to manually inputting calendar events, the media diary may import calendar events from other sources or applications that are being executed on the digital device, such as from other, internal or external, personal planner or calendar applications, email systems or the like. Further, the information related to a
25 calendar event **130** creates metadata information related to the calendar event or reminder.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the calendar view or calendar / planner portion of the media diary application may be synchronized with other calendar or personal planner applications. In this regard, synchronization will allow the
30 calendar /planner portion of the media diary to import and/or export calendar event reminders to/from other calendar applications. The other calendar applications may be

implemented on the same device as the media diary application or they may be implemented on other devices. Synchronization of the calendar event information between remote devices may be accomplished by any known wireless or wired network communication technique, such as wireless telecom, short range radio network,
5 Bluetooth®, WLAN, RFID, IPDC, DVB, IrDA, Internet or the like.

The time blocks **120** may include a time now indicator **150** that may be accentuated in bold-faced type or other way graphically accentuated in the time block that includes the current time. The time now indicator serves to indicate the current moment of time. The time now indicator will be an active indicator that displays the
10 current time, in hour and minutes, and moves forward to the next time block with the passage of time. In addition, the calendar view **100** may graphically distinguish between time blocks and calendar events that are in the past and time blocks and calendar events that are in the future. In the illustrated example, time blocks and events in the past are designated by italicized text and time blocks and events in the future are designated by
15 non-italicized, standard text. As the time now indicator moves to the next time block to indicate the passage of time, the distinguishing graphics of the time blocks and calendar events will also change to indicate the proper time state.

Figure 3 illustrates an example of a media view **200** that provides for digital media files, such as digital images, digital video, digital audio, computer games,
20 computer software, digital text files or the like, to be accessible to the media diary user, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Typically the media files that are represented in the media view will be associated to a past calendar event or past reminder. The media view will be generated by second computer-readable program instructions implemented in association with a digital device. It is noted that the media
25 view herein depicted and described is by way of example only; other media views that provide for the display of media file representations in association with a moment of time or a time period are also contemplated and within the inventive concepts herein disclosed. Alternatively, the media files that are represented in the media view may be associated with a moment or period of time based on a timestamp in the media file, without having
30 noted an event related to the media file, in advance, in the calendar view or application.

The media view of the illustrated embodiment includes date columns **210**, which correspond to a specific date, although the media view may be differently oriented if so desired. In the example shown, four date columns are visible on the display corresponding to the four previous dates. In an alternate embodiment the media view may include columns **210**, which may correspond to any moment of time, such as a year, a month, a week, a day, an hour or the like. The date columns will include media file representations **220** that are related to media files and are connected, in time, to the specific date, event and/or time. For example, the media file representations may include representations that provide the user with access to digital files, such as video files, image files, audio files, text files, emails, short message service (SMS) messages, multimedia message service (MMS) messages and the like and provide the user with information pertaining to the content of the files. The media file representations may include an icon, or a thumbnail image, a portion of the text of a text document or message or any other suitable media file representation with or without a title of the media file.

Typically, the media diary will receive the media file from a digital recording function associated with the device or via digital communication from other devices. For example:

- 1) If the digital device is a cellular telephone that incorporates a digital camera or any other digital device that serves as a digital recording device, a digital media file (i.e., image) may be communicated directly via cellular telephone access from the camera/telephone device to the media diary in another device.
- 2) If the digital device is an independent digital camera or any other digital recording/storing/playing device and equipped with a wireless or wireline network connection the digital media file may be communicated directly from networked device to a media diary in another device.
- 3) If the digital device is an independent digital camera or any other digital recording/storing/playing device and equipped with short range digital communication means the digital media file may communicated first to a long range digital communication device (i.e. cellular telephone, a PDA, laptop or the like) that then passes the files to another device with a media diary. Alternatively,

in proximity, a file transfer may occur directly to another device with a media diary.

- 4) The media files may be communicated by a physical memory unit / device transferred from one device to another device.

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As such, the digital recording/storing/playing device from which the media file is communicated (i.e., the passing device) may include, and implement, the media diary application or may not include the media diary application. If the passing device includes the media diary application, the media files may be processed for media diary purposes prior to communication to other devices.

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The communication /synchronization of the media files may be automatic after a creation of a new media file, or after a certain amount of media files have been created. Alternatively, the communication may occur at a selected time or on a request of a user and may include a single media file or a group of media files. The communication/synchronization may occur via any wireless or wireline network communication method, such as for example via SMS, MMS or file transfer. The communication, i.e. synchronization, may also occur from a back end media diary application/device to any digital recording / storing / playing device with or without the media diary application.

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The media file will typically have associated metadata, in the form of a timestamp, event name, file name, location information, people in the event or in the media file, objects in the media file, file type, file size or the like. The media file metadata may be automatically inputted by the digital recording device at the time of the creation of the media file or may be manually inputted, such as at the time of creation of the media file or receipt or transfer of the media file. In addition, it is possible for the metadata to previously exist in conjunction with a calendar event in the media diary and to be associated with the digital media file at the moment the file is created, if the device creating the media file executes the media diary application.

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Once the media diary receives the media file, the media file metadata is combined and/or correlated with the calendar event metadata information. The combined and/or correlated metadata information is associated and stored with the media file in the media

diary, such that, when a user accesses the media file via the media file representation in the media view the user will be presented with the combined metadata and calendar event information. See for example, media file representations **220** of Figure 2, in which, a thumbnail image is combined with a title and text entry. Additionally, media files
5 forming or related to a specific joint group, e.g. based on a specific event or a time period, will be placed in the media view in a joint group **230** under a common title or subject. The title or subject may be manually inputted or may be inherited from metadata related to a calendar event or reminder, or, exclusively, from metadata related to the media file. The last option becomes relevant if the media file does not have a
10 correspondence event or reminder in the associated calendar application.

In addition to displaying media file representations, the media view may also display past calendar events or reminders that do not have associated media files. The media diary application may be configured to automatically import calendar events and reminders from the calendar view portion of application to the media view portion of the
15 application. In this regard, calendar events and reminders that are associated with a past period of time are displayed in the media view irrespective of their having associated media files. Alternately, the user of the media file may configure the media diary to allow for specific calendar events and reminders, as chosen by the user, to be displayed in the media view.

In addition, the media view **200** may provide for a zoom function. The zoom function will allow the user of the media diary to zoom in or zoom out of the media view, as the application dictates. For example, zooming in on a particular portion of the media view will display the media file representations **220** in greater detail; thus, providing the user better recognition of the media file that is being represented. Zooming out on a
20 particular portion of the media view will display more media file representations; thus, providing the user insight into the overall quantity and type of media files that are associated with the time period displayed in the media view.
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Referring again to Figure 1, which depicts media application display **10** that is a combination of a calendar view **100**, a media view **200** and a timeline view **300** with a
30 time bar **310**. The timeline portion of the view incorporates a time bar, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. As depicted, the calendar view **100** is

displayed on the right-hand side of the digital device's display, the media view **200** is displayed on the left-hand side of the display and the timeline view features are displayed above or, alternatively, beneath both the calendar view and the media view. The timeline view will be generated by the computer-readable program instructions as implemented in association with a digital device. It is noted that the timeline view herein depicted and described is by way of example only; other timeline views that provide for the display of a timeline in combination with a media view and a calendar view are also contemplated and within the inventive concepts herein disclosed.

The timeline view **300** of the illustrated embodiment provides for a time bar **310** and a time handle **320**. The time handle allows the media diary to be scrolled forward in time and backward in time. As depicted, the calendar view **100** displays the current date, indicated by a current time indicator **150**, and the two subsequent dates, for example. The media view **200** displays the four previous dates, for example. The time handle is associated with the center most column, that is, in the depicted example, the column associated with the previous day, i.e. Tuesday 18, June. If the time handle is moved from the stationary position to the left, the calendar view, media view and, in some instances the time bar will scroll to the right, such that, more past dates in the media view will be scrolled and displayed. Moving the time handle to the left, such that more past dates in the media view are scrolled and displayed will eventually cause the calendar view to be scrolled out of the timeline view. If the time handle is moved from the stationary position to the right, the calendar view, the media view and, in some instances the time bar will scroll to the left, such that, more future dates in the calendar view will be scrolled displayed. Moving the time handle to the right, such that more future dates in the calendar view are scrolled and displayed will eventually cause the media view to be scrolled out of the timeline view. The stationary position is usually in the centerline of the media diary display, or in the centerline of the time bar, or, alternatively, in the centerline of the media view. Alternatively, both media view and calendar view may have their own media handles (not shown in the figure), and they may be scrolled independently.

The time bar **310** allows the digital device user to focus in on specific dates.

In the example shown, the bold cased blocks indicate a time period **330**, such as a week and the individual time units **340** within the blocks may indicate specific dates on which media files currently exist. Alternatively, shading within the time bar may indicate dates on which media files exist. For example, dark shading within the time bar may indicate that files exist on those dates, while light shading within the time bar may indicate that no files exist on those dates. In addition, the size (i.e., the length) of the time unit may indicate the volume of media files that exist on a specific date. For example, a relatively large time unit will indicate that multiple media files exist for that time unit (i.e., day) and a relatively small time unit will indicate minimal or no media files exist for that time unit. In addition by using different color codes the types of the media files existing in the individual time units may be indicated. For example, red may indicate image files, blue video files, yellow audio files etc. Different color codes may also be combined in an individual time unit.

In another embodiment the color codes may be used to separate different time period **340** and time unit **330** (see Figure 4.). For example every time period, such as a week, may have different shading and/or slightly modified color from the other. In the same regard, the time units, such as a day, may be visually separated from each other by different shading and/or slightly modified color. Additionally, time periods and time units may be separated from each other in the same fashion. For example, every even numbered time period may have gray shading and every odd numbered period may be without shading, and every even numbered time unit may be dark blue and every odd numbered time unit light blue. Many different graphical alterations may be used to depict and separate time periods and time units.

In addition, the size (i.e., the length) of the time unit may indicate the volume of media files that exist on a specific date. For example, a relatively large time unit will indicate that multiple media files exist for that time unit (i.e., day) and a relatively small time unit will indicate minimal or no media files exist for that time unit. Thus, the size of the time unit of this embodiment bears a direct correspondence to the amount of media files associated with the time unit. The amount of media files may be measured by the number of media files, the size (in bytes) of the media files or in some other manner.

The time bar **310** may be scrolled by mouse/cursor activation or keyboard activation. Scrolling of the time bar will result in the viewable display of new time units outside of those that are currently being displayed. For example, scrolling may occur when the cursor on the display is moved over the time bar and reaches one end of the display. In addition, placing the cursor over the time bar and holding down the left mouse key while moving the mouse will scroll the time bar in the direction of the mouse movement. Additionally, the time bar may be configured with arrow buttons at each end of the time bar that upon activation initiate a scroll function.

Figure 4 illustrates a media diary display **10** that incorporates a navigable time bar, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The time bar **310** provides a hierarchical representation of time for the purpose of providing digital device users ease and efficiency in locating media files. In the illustrated embodiment, the time hierarchy includes levels of indicators for time span **350**, time period **340** and time unit **330**. The indicators serve to sub-divide time into manageable segments for the purpose of providing the user a navigable application. The levels of indicators within the time bar may vary in number and may either be predefined by the application or may be dynamically configured by the device user. In addition to the levels of indicators, the time segment defined by a level may either be predefined by the application or may be dynamically configured by the device user. For example, in the illustrated embodiment the time span **350** level may define monthly segments, the time period **340** level may define weekly segments and the time unit **330** level may define day segments. Additional levels, such as a century, decade, year, hour, week, day or second may also be included in the time bar and/or in the media view or calendar view as dictated by many factors, such as the lifespan of the diary, the amount of media files in the diary or the task for which the diary will be implemented.

The navigable time bar **310** allows the user to browse, monitor and access a specific date and, thus, the media files associated with that date. In the illustrated embodiment the time span **350** level includes individual blocks or segments that represent different periods of time, in the illustrated embodiment the blocks represent months. The blocks within the time span **350** level may be activated to display the time periods **340** and time units **330** within a given time span. For instance, in the illustrated embodiment

of Figure 4, the tab that indicates the month of July has been activated, indicated by the bold faced text and outline of the block, and the corresponding time periods and time units for that month are scrolled into the visible display of the device. Activation of a tab may typically be implemented by a keystroke or mouse function. Alternatively, the position of the block may be in a fixed position on the display and when scrolling, the name of the tab, such as the name of the month, will change.

In the illustrated example of Figure 4 the time period **340** level indicates weeks and the time unit **330** level indicates days. The time period level and time unit level will typically possess activation capability that provides the device user with access to the time period or time unit, and either the associated media view or calendar view. In other words, the time period level provides information about the weeks in the selected month of July and the time unit level provides information about the days in the selected month of July. A user may select a week from the time period level or a day from the time unit level and the display will focus upon the selected week or day, in the form of a calendar view, a media view or a combined media and calendar view. Typically, when a graphical interface, such as a pointer, overlies a specific time unit, the date associated with that time unit will appear on the display. If the user desires access to the calendar view or the media view associated with that particular date, the user will activate the date by keystroke or appropriate mouse function. Activation of a time period will invoke scrolling of the media view or calendar view, such that the media view or calendar view associated with the time period will appear on the display. Alternatively, the time period may also possess activation capabilities and provide the device user with access to the specific time period, such as a week, or time unit, such as date, and either the associated media view or calendar view.

It is also noted, that in many embodiments the length of the time unit **330** in the time bar **310** is proportional to the width of the corresponding column **210** in the media view **200**. The width of the column in the media view will typically signify the amount of media files associated with a period or moment of time. For example, in the embodiment illustrated in Figure 4, the length of the time units are in 1:5 ratio with the width of the corresponding date column in the media view. The user may adjust this ratio to affect more or less time units visible in the viewable area of the display. For example,

if the ratio is adjusted to 1:10, more time units will be visible in the time bar, thus, providing the user more information as to the amount of media files associated with the time unit.

Figure 5 illustrates an alternate embodiment of the present invention, in which, the media diary application is limited to a media storage application. In this embodiment the display will include a combination of a media view **200** and a time bar **310**. In this embodiment, the computer-readable program instructions will generate a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a predefined time. The instructions will additionally generate a time bar that includes indicators for time span **350**, time period **340** and time unit **330**. The media view includes date columns **210**, which correspond to a specific date. In the example shown, four date columns are visible on the display corresponding to four dates. The date columns will include media file representations **220** that are related to media files and are connected, in time, to the specific date. For example, the media file representations may include representations that provide the user with access to digital files, such as video files, image files, audio files text files and the like and provide the user with information pertaining to the content of the files. The media file representations may include an image and title of a digital image or video file, a portion of the text of a text message or any other suitable media file representation. The columns may also have titles, topics and/or event names for a media file or a group of media files.

In this embodiment of the invention, the date columns may include both past dates, present dates and future dates. While most media files will be categorized in past date columns it is possible for media events to be categorized in future date columns. For example, a yet-to-be presented multi-media presentation can be categorized under a future date column.

The features of the timeline view may include a time bar **310**. The time bar provides the ability for a device user to focus on a specific date or browse specific dates for the purpose of locating media files efficiently. The configuration and functionality of the time bar shown in Figure 5 is similar to the configuration and functionality shown in Figure 4 and described at length above.

In addition, the Figure 4 and 5 embodiments of the invention may include a time handle **320** (shown in Figure 1). The time handle will typically be visible in the timeline view and centered in the view of the application, such as the media view, or the visible display. The time handle can be moved to the left or right on the display to provide for scrolling of the time bar, the media view and/or the calendar view.

A further embodiment of the invention is defined by a digital device that implements the media diary application and specifically the time bar aspect of the media diary, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 6 illustrates a block diagram of digital device **500** that implements the media diary. As previously noted, the digital device will typically be a digital device capable of digital communication with other digital devices, such as a mobile terminal including for example, a mobile telephone, a PDA, laptop computer or the like. However, the digital device may be any other device capable of displaying the media diary of the present invention such as a digital camera, digital video recorder, digital audio recorder or the like.

The digital device **500** will include a processing unit **510**, such as a processor, an application specific integrated circuit, analog and/or digital circuitry, or any other similar device that executes computer-readable program instructions for accessing media files. Wherein the program instructions and the media files are generally stored in memory device **512**. The computer-readable program instructions may include first instructions **520** for generating a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a predefined time, and second instructions **530** for generating a calendar view that represents time in calendar format and associates events with respective periods of time and third instructions **540** for generating a hierarchal time bar that divides time into selectable segments for the purpose of accessing within the one or more of the digital media files associated with a predefined time . In an alternate embodiment, the operating instructions may be limited to first instructions **520** for generating a media view that provides access to digital media files and associates digital media files with a predefined time and third instructions **540** for generating a hierarchal time bar that divides time into selectable segments for the purpose of accessing within the one or more of the digital media files associated with a predefined time. In addition, the

digital device will include a display **550** that is in communication with the processing unit and provides a presentation mechanism for the calendar view and the media view.

Additionally the invention is embodied in a method for providing digital media file location in a digital media diary. Figure 7 provides a flow diagram of such a method.

5 At step **700**, the digital media diary associates a digital media file with a predefined time. Typically, the digital media file will include metadata information that was either inputted automatically or manually when the digital media file was created. The metadata information provides the necessary timestamp to associate the media file with a predefined time. At step **710**, the media file is represented in a media view of the media

10 diary. The media view provides access to the media file via the associated moment or period of time. Thus, the media diary categorizes the media file according to the associated predefined time, typically the date the media file was created or the date of an event associated with the media file. At step **720**, the media diary displays a hierarchal time bar in combination with the media view that provides the user of the media diary

15 with selectable periods of time for the purpose of locating the period of time associated with the digital media file. In doing so, the selectable periods of time are sized on the display in accordance with the amount of media files; i.e., number of files, size (in bytes) of files or the like. The user can activate a period of time, such as a year, month, week or day to focus in on the specific date of interest, i.e., the date associated with the media file.

20 For example, if the user desires to access a file created on 01 January 2004, the user may activate the year 2004. Activation of the year may cause the months within year 2004 to be displayed. The user may then activate the month January to cause the days within the month of January to be displayed. The user may then activate the first day of the month (01 January) to cause representations of the media files associated with that date to be

25 displayed on the digital device display.

An alternate embodiment of the invention is defined by a method of using the hierarchal time bar of the digital media diary. Figure 8 depicts a flow diagram of such a method, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. At step **800**, the digital device user is provided a display of a hierarchal time bar and a media view that

30 represents media files in association with a predefined time. At step **810**, the user activates one or more levels, time units or time periods of the hierarchal time bar to

display the specific time for which a media file is associated. For example, the user may activate a year level, a month level, a week level for the purpose of displaying the specific time period, typically a date, associated with the media file. Again, size will depend on media files for that date. At step 820, the user will activate the specific time
5 period, typically a date, associated with the file for the purpose of displaying a representation of the media file in the media view. At step 830, the user will activate the representation of the media file to access or display the file on the display.

The described embodiments of the present invention provide for a media file management application for a digital device that will incorporate a hierarchal time bar for
10 locating media files within the application. The hierarchal time bar provides the user with ease and efficiency in locating the specific predefined time, typically a date, that is associated with the media file. Even in instances in which the media file stores a large quantity of media files over a long period of many years, the user will be able to quickly maneuver through the hierarchal time bar to pinpoint the predefined time associated with
15 the media file. The hierarchal nature of the time bar provides for the relevant portions of the time bar to be displayed on the digital device display, even in those instances in which the digital device is a handheld digital device with a minimal sized display.

Many modifications and other embodiments of the inventions set forth herein will come to mind to one skilled in the art to which these inventions pertain having the benefit
20 of the teachings presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is to be understood that the inventions are not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed and that modifications and other embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of
25 limitation.